PUBLIC HEARING TRANSCRIPT
DESIGN REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
OF PUBLIC HEARING FOR
NIAGARA GORGE CORRIDOR: ROBERT MOSES
PARKWAY REMOVAL PROJECT

Public Hearing Minutes taken pursuant to Notice, held at the CONFERENCE & EVENT CENTER, NIAGARA FALLS, 101 Old Falls Street, Niagara Falls, New York 14303, taken on AUGUST 25, 2016, commencing at 7:05 p.m. Before SARA E. BEITER, Notary Public.
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Whereupon, two copies of newspaper ads were then received and marked as Exhibits 1 & 2 for identification.)

Whereupon, the Niagara Gorge Corridor Design Report/Environmental Assessment, Volume 1 book was then received and marked as Exhibit 3 for identification.)

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Volume 2 was then received and marked as Exhibit 4 for identification.)

(Whereupon, the Niagara Gorge Corridor Design Report/Environmental Assessment, Volume 3 was then received and marked as Exhibit 5 for identification.)

(Whereupon, the Niagara Gorge Corridor Design Report/Environmental Assessment, Volume 4 was then received and marked as Exhibit 6 for identification.)

(Whereupon, the Niagara Gorge Corridor Design Report/Environmental Assessment, Volume 5 was then received and marked as Exhibit 7 for identification.)

PAUL TRONOLONE: Good evening, everyone. My name is Paul Tronolone and I'd like to call the formal presentation of the design hearing to order. I'm from USA Niagara Development Corporation. The time is now 6:03 and I'd like to officially call the (inaudible) portion of the public design hearing to order. Now, on behalf of the New York State
Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation or state parks, as we refer in short, as well as the many other agencies, which I'll go over in a minute, I'll be presiding over tonight's hearing to receive comments on the design report and environmental assessment, or DR/EA, for the Robert Moses Parkway Removal Project.

I'll be assisted tonight in the technical presentation by Tom Donohue, the project manager with the Parsons Transportation Group. The project engineer (inaudible) as well, Anthony Dispenza, from the New York Department of Transportation. But at this point, I'd like to invite Mark Thomas, State Parks Western District Director, to the podium to welcome you and make some opening remarks.

MARK THOMAS: Good evening. Thank you for being here this evening. And I'd like to -- on behalf of our governor, Andrew Cuomo, and our park's commissioner, Rosa, we thank you for coming out this evening to be a part of this
next stage in the development of a large
expansive parkway and in the removal of a
major section of what's been known as the
Robert Moses Parkway, newly named as the
Niagara Scenic Parkway. And also, very
importantly, the complete rebuild of
Whirlpool Street in the City of Niagara
Falls, which as you'll see this evening will
be the dual purpose in serving as not only
the road where people access this passing
through, but the community will have access
from the side streets and connect to
Whirlpool Street and to the Gorge, bringing
open access for the residents of Niagara
Falls to their waterfront once again.

We're very excited about the program as
you're going to see it this evening. We look
forward to your comments as we advance this
work into the next stage, which is called
final design, as the gentlemen will be
walking you through as we get deeper in this
evening. This next stage is where we will
wrap up all of the intensive design work.
And your input this evening will feed into that process. We thank you once again for being here and we look forward to your presentation but also your participation this evening. Thank you.

PAUL TRONOLONE: Thank you, Mark. This is the agenda for tonight's hearing. After this introduction, I'll go over some of the purposes and some background on the project, including what we've been working on since our last public hearing back in September of 2015. We'll then go over briefly over project alternatives or the components of both build alternative and the no-build alternative. I'll go over both of those, what we mean by that as we go through the project. And then I'll provide an overview of the effects of the build alternative. And then I'll be turning the presentation over to Anthony Dispenza from DOT to talk about some of the requirements of the Eminent Domain Procedure Law.

Anthony will be providing an overview of
DOT procedures to secure any temporary or permanent easements or right-of-way that's necessary for the project. Although, for this particular project, we have no major residential or commercial takings or displacements as a result of the project. Nevertheless, even for things like easements for construction, we have to go through this process. So, Anthony will be going through that. Finally, we'll go over the project schedule and then open the floor to your comments.

So with that, let's get started for the hearing purpose. The purpose of tonight's hearing is to provide an overview of the assessments conducted in the Design Report Environmental Assessment, or DR/EA, and to receive your comments on the projected social, economic and environment impacts of the project. I'd like to point out, this is the last public meeting before we actually make a decision on the project, before we get what's called, design approval, to actually
do the project. However, it's likely that we'll be conducting various neighborhood and community sessions during final design and actually during construction to talk about things like construction staging. Tonight's the final public hearing for actually getting comments before we make a decision with the project.

And I'd like to make a point that this is a formal public hearing. We actually have a court stenographer that's recording all the proceedings and it's for you to make comments. But we will not be opening up the floor for a question-and-answer session. However, the gentlemen out in the hallway -- the ladies and gentlemen out in the hallway will be available throughout the session tonight to answer any questions you might have. And if you then have to make a comment for the record, you can come in and make a comment for the record or put it in writing and submit it.

Just to go over, there are several
agencies involved in the process.

Because -- to begin, because this is a project on the portion of the National Highway System which the parkway is on, we have to go through a federal process (inaudible) is being conducted in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration. And which the FHWA is actually the lead federal agency on the project and they will be the agency that ultimately authorizes design approval.

At the state and local level, a number of agencies have entered into what's called the Memorandum of Agreement, back in 2006, to jointly fund and undertake the project including State Parks, the Department of Transportation, the City of Niagara Falls, the USA Niagara and the New York Power Authority. Why so many agencies? Well, State Parks actually owns the parkway. And they would be the state agency -- the lead state agency that would actually issue design approval.
The Department of Transportation maintains the parkway on behalf of State Parks under agreement with State Parks. The entire project area is within the City of Niagara Falls. Thus, we've been working very closely with the City. And my own agency, USA Niagara -- which is a subsidy of Empire State Development -- has helped in securing funding and planning various aspects of the project and providing some technical oversight.

And last, but certainly not least, the New York Power Authority built the parkway in 1961 and owns the majority of the land on which the parkway sits, and actually owns all the open space within the Gorge and along the Gorge rim -- or most of it. And the parkway is actually funding this process in the (inaudible) share of the actual implementation, the final design and the construction of the project. And we thank them sincerely for that.

As I said, this process and the entire
DR/EA process has been implemented with a number of federal and state laws and regulations. The biggest ones are -- at the federal level, are the National Environment Policy Act, which requires federal agencies to take a hard look at the social, economic and environmental impacts of their actions. At the state level, there's a similar law called the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act, or SEQR, which requires state agencies to do the same thing. Agencies like State Park.

Also, we're implementing a project in accordance with -- which calls Section 4(f), the Department of Transportation after merely Section 4(f), which prohibits the temporary or permanent use of lands and parks, wildlife preserves or historic resources of transportation projects, unless there are no reasonable or feasible alternatives. In a similar way, we have to follow Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which requires us to consider the effects of our
actions on properties that are on or eligible of the National Register.

And there's a host of other federal and state laws that require you to -- at least to assess document and receive public comment on the potential effects of proposed projects, like coastal zone resources and threatened endangered species. And even the State's (inaudible) Eminent Domain Procedure Law. But the important thing about this entire list is that this single process and this single DR/EA document allows you to make a comment that addresses all of those laws.

There's -- typically, you would have separate public meetings and public hearings for all of them. This is a single (inaudible) process, a single document that covers all of those -- those items. Just for the record, the document has been on file since July 24th at a variety of local locations for your review, including Niagara Falls State Park, DeVeaux Woods State Park, the local library and the City Clerk's
Office. It's also available online. And all of these -- all of the information on these two slides, if you want to download the document or go and see it, it is included in your brochures tonight.

Just for a few other housekeeping items, if you haven't done so already, please sign the sign-in sheet. It's our official record of the public hearing and it allows us to inform you of subsequent notices of any future activities associated with the project.

Finally, just for the record, I'd like the court stenographer to mark a couple of items for the public record. First, a copy of the public notices that appeared in the Niagara Gazette on July 24th and August 7th. And this notice was also distributed to involved interested agencies, sent to two hundred fifty persons on the mailing list -- on the e-mail list, and sent by regular mail to over eleven hundred persons. And secondly, I'd like to mark the full copy
of the Design Report Environmental Assessment
prepared by Parsons, dated July 2016, all
five volumes. Is that all done?
THE COURT STENOGRAPHER: Yes.
PAUL TRONOLONE: Just going through for a little
background, exactly what is a Design Report
Environmental Assessment? Well, this is
what's referred to as the design approval
document. It's a document upon which the
decision makers look for -- federal and state
level use to determine whether or not to do
the project. It covers two things. First,
it provides enough detail and design to make
broad decisions in terms of the alignment of
the road or how wide it is, whether it
includes lighting or sidewalks, things like
that, as well as general overall contents
regarding landscaping and every other gateway
features of the streetscaping. And it also
evaluates whether it required any land to be
acquired in order to implement the project.
Secondly the DR/EA, in accordance with
the federal and state laws, has to evaluate
all social and economic and environmental impacts of the project alternatives. In this case, after going through a great deal of studies, we only have two alternatives. One that's called the build alternative, and that's the project that's actually depicted out in the hallway tonight that's been presented back in late September. And the other is called the no-build alternative. That's essentially leaving things in place exactly as they are now, but I'll go over this in a moment.

Just to remind everyone about the project corridor, it starts at Main Street in downtown Niagara Falls and goes roughly two miles to Findlay Drive. The Robert Moses Parkway or the Niagara Scenic Parkway, right-of-way goes along that corridor. Right next to it is Whirlpool Street, which runs into a portion of Third Street, which immediately abuts it. And as we all know, back in 2001, half of the parkway was actually converted to a large multi-use trail
just basically using the Essex Southbound
Highway, what is called the Robert Moses
Parkway Trail. So that's basically the
situation we have right now.

Some project history. Back in 2013, we
undertook a public scope -- what's called a
public scoping process, which evaluated six
alternatives for this corridor between
Downtown Niagara Falls all the way to
Lewiston. And out of all those six
alternatives, the three alternatives that
came out of that process dealt with the Main
Street to Findlay Drive section exactly the
same.

So, we concurred -- we conferred with
the Federal Government -- with the Federal
Highway Administration on whether we can
break this piece off since everybody agreed
on this piece, whereas there was some
disagreement on where we should go north of
Findlay Drive. If we all agree on this
piece, we can advance that to preliminary and
final engineering and actually get it done.
And the Federal Government made us document whether it had -- it met three criteria. Whether it has a logical (inaudible) or rational end points for a transportation improvement and for review of potential environmental impacts. So, whether it had what's called, independent utility. Meaning, if we never did anything north of Findlay Drive, would this still be a feasible transportation project that met the project objectives.

And the fact that the -- if you do the project, it cannot restrict anything that happens north of Findlay Drive for subsequent phases of the project. You have to have the full range of possible alternatives, have to be reasonable north of Findlay Drive if you do this. And the Federal Government concurred with our process. We did actually, along white paper, explained the significance included in the DR/EA.

Just to go over some of the project goals, we're looking to improve access to
transportation. Not just for vehicles along
the Gorge, but for all modes of
transportation, both along the Gorge and to
and from the Gorge from adjoining
neighborhoods. We're also looking to improve
the certain ecology of the Gorge and the
setting of the Gorge rim by right-sizing
transportation access and essentially
removing as much pavement as possible.

So, by doing so, we're hoping that we
can contribute to economic vitality and
revitalization. Basically, by perceiving the
Falls, the Niagara Gorge and the City as a
single place, rather than three separate
places separated by highways. Thus, we want
to minimize impacts to, but we're actually
improving the setting of adjacent
neighborhoods along the Gorge. All of this
is intended to advance the objectives of the
Niagara (inaudible), which looks to create a
green corridor for Lake Ontario to Lake Erie
along the Niagara River.

So what have we been doing since our
last public meeting back in September? Well, we're refining the build alternative based upon the comments you gave us. We conducted numerous environmental studies. And the big thing we encountered -- we had to go through what's the Section 106 Historic Resources process. Because at the beginning of this process, we thought that most of this corridor is significantly disturbed and we wouldn't have to do archeological surveys in the field, that we could actually document the service.

But when we actually got out and actually did the work, we found that we had to do subsequent infield shovel tests. And quite frankly, we were doing that in the fall of last year and we lost the season. Once the ground freezes, you can't do archeological surveys. So we had to wait until March of this year to do those surveys, then meet with consultant parties, which are community groups and the local tribal groups, and then document that entire 106 process.
And that allowed us to finish up that 4(f) assessment to assess the impacts historic resources and the use of parks -- park land as part of the project. Then we wrapped that up into a five-volume DR/EA that has been -- had to go through several internal reviews with the Federal Government and was released in July of this year.

Let's talk a little bit about alternatives. As I said, the baseline is the no-build alternative. This means doing nothing. It's basically the baseline about what the build alternative for the actual project that we're proposing is compared in terms of impacts. For the build alternative, it basically includes these three basic components. Removing all expressway features of the parkway, rebuilding Whirlpool Street and a portion of Third Street, natural restoring any reclaimed lands from the removal of the parkway's highway components and incorporating a trail system along the Niagara Gorge linking to the neighborhoods.
Now, over the course of the last year and a half, you've been coming to public hearings and you've looked at various design options, what I'll call them, concepts, were basically focused on the south end and the north end of the project. And we basically presented the -- our conclusions on that build alternative last September, but I just wanted to sort of recap them quickly.

At the south end of the project, we looked at a variety of alternatives. We came up with an alignment of the portion of the existing on-ramps of the parkway, scaling them down and creating a landscape driveway to the Discovery Center. And then actually having a portion of Walnut Street extend -- which currently dead-ends at the parkway -- extend all the way to the Discovery Center to link this whole area to the city grid and create that visual connection to -- between the Niagara Aquarium and the Gorge Discovery Center.

On the north end of the project,
basically the issues involve whether or not we had Findlay Drive go into this new Whirlpool Street or to have Whirlpool Street terminated at Findlay Drive and continue. And after a variety of neighborhood sessions and things, we came with a conclusion that a stop sign on Findlay Drive intersecting into the Whirlpool Street work the best. Basically, from an environmental perspective and a traffic perspective, either alternative worked. However, as we looked in detail at some of the long-term traffic analysis, this alternative sort of prevents some of the peak hour queuing in the traffic in front of some of the houses. And it was more amenable to the community.

So, the public comments on the build alternative that we incorporated, as I said, that traffic stop sign on Findlay Drive. We also got comments that the roadway should be designed to allow for all future public transit systems. And all the features of the design can accommodate buses and trolley
movements. The final design was also set to incorporate green infrastructure. And because we're removing so much highway infrastructure and so much pavement, we're going to be able to include various features to prevent storm water from entering the City's combined sewage treatment system and be able to naturally deal with it on site.

So, let's go over that build alternative very quickly because this is on display out in the hallway. But if you look, north is to your right on this drawing and Canada is actually at the top of the drawing. This is the area around the Rainbow Bridge at the southern end of the project, which is basically dealing with the last highway remnant of the parkway that actually passed under the Rainbow Bridge. But we'd open that up and make it into a service drive for the Bridge Commission. But they use it this way right now. But this would involve some of the jersey barriers and things like that. And you see that landscape entry drive into
the Discovery Center and an extension of Walnut Street connecting in and around the aquarium.

We also have -- what we have to deal with is there's an existing entry drive to the city's sewage pumping system right down this slope here that we have to accommodate through a new drive and easement that would pass through the aquarium property. But I'll go over this in a second, because it basically carries you down the slope into the existing Sewage Treatment Plant.

Now, the parkway currently runs right here. And you can see that it's replaced with a series of trails, landscaping (inaudible). And then Third Street and Whirlpool Street would be reconstructed. There would be a series of overlooks designed along the entire way of the gateway, features leading into that trail system. Each of the streets along Whirlpool Street would have connections to that trail network and the Gorge would carry through.
Coming up to the Whirlpool Bridge Plaza, we would have to work around that. We have plenty of room to do that. We're leaving open the possibility of a possible future overlook on the existing abandoned railroad bridge. This is not a part of the project, however we wanted to include it as a consideration that would require an agreement between the City of Niagara Falls, Ontario and the City of Niagara Falls, New York. But we are carrying it forward so that we can show it.

And then, activity at the end of the process -- or the end of the corridor at the northern end around Findlay Drive. And then you can see how it feeds back into the existing Niagara Scenic Parkway and the existing Robert Moses Parkway Trail system. Easier when you see it from an aerial-shot distance. This is an existing shot looking south from Orchard Parkway. This is the Parkway, right here. This is Whirlpool Street. You can see it existing and you can
get a sense of what we're talking about in
terms of removing that expressway feature and
adding that trail network and revegetating
the area and then reconstructing Whirlpool
Street. Looking the other direction from
Orchard Parkway toward the overpass under the
Whirlpool Bridge, you can see the existing
condition of this. This is the Parkway,
right here. And Robert Moses Parkway Trail.
This is Whirlpool Street. Get a sense of
what that would look like if that was removed
and revegetated.

The build alternative cost estimate.
Right now, we're carrying a cost estimate for
construction only of thirty-five million
dollars. But actually, when you talk about
the full budget and you add in things like
(inaudible) documents, construction
(inaudible), oversight, we're currently
carrying a full construction and oversight
budget of forty-two million -- of up to
forty-two million. And as Mark said earlier,
the governor was here in March and announced
the availability of that funding. So we can move forward with this project.

Now, I'd like to turn the meeting over to Tom Donohue to talk a little bit and show you a simulation of the traffic projections that were done. And keeping in mind that under federal regulations that we have to do these traffic projections for the estimated time of completion plus twenty years. So in this case, the estimated time of completion plus twenty years is around the year 2040. So, keep that in mind when he's talking about the traffic impacts.

THOMAS DONOHUE: Thanks, Paul. Give Paul a little break here. There's a lot of stuff that the DR/EA -- which is regarding traffic. And I don't want to go over every single detail with the local service at intersections and all this other stuff. What I think is really important and I've heard from previous meetings is, what the heck is going to happen to Whirlpool Street. So, I want to just focus a little bit on Whirlpool
Street.

What I did here is, I put together a little graph that shows the last thirty years of traffic. And these are what's called, Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes. It's basically the amount of traffic going both directions on a given day, on an average day. So, back in the early 90's, it really peaked to almost three thousand vehicles per day. And it's actually on a steady decline down to 2015 where it's -- excuse me. Where it's about two thousand vehicles. But where does it go from here? Does it continue on a downward spiral and just go to zero? I really doubt it. It doesn't make any sense. Would it continue out for the next twenty years at just a flat, steady -- without any changes at all? Probably not either.

So, we had some discussion with the local -- or with the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Erie and Niagara Counties. Basically, the Greater Buffalo and Niagara Regional Transportation Counsel. And
they're really in charge of future planning for the area. Their original model projects out what the future changes in population, employment and economic activity in the area is. So, they didn't think it would shoot flat either. After talking with them and looking at their model, they project that this area in Niagara Falls really should see about a half of percent per year in growth.

So, we're going to use that half of percent per year growth as an estimate to project traffic out. Now, when we started this project, it really was back in around 2010 when we started looking at the traffic volumes. And we noticed that it's declined 2010. But to be safe, to really kind of be conservative on looking at our estimates for impacts, we kept with the higher volumes back in 2010 and projected a growth of a half of percent per year based on those earlier volumes. And then it gives us a number that's almost twice what we have today, even though it's just a half percent per year.
Now, what's going to happen -- that's just the future if Whirlpool stays the same. Once we take a look at the volume of traffic that's on the parkway, also grown at a half percent per year and that traffic -- at least the portion of it -- and we're estimating that about seventy percent of that traffic will go into Whirlpool Street, we end up with a number that's about sixty-seven hundred vehicles per day on the average going up and down Whirlpool Street.

So, what does that look like? Well, it's basically half of what it used to be back in the day -- in the early 90's. And it really equals traffic that was there just back in the late 90's. And to give you another perspective, if you think of like Pine Avenue going through Little Italy, Pine Avenue currently today has about twice the traffic of this sixty-seven hundred vehicles. They have about twelve thousand vehicles today going down Pine Avenue. And even just eight years ago, it was three times this
number all on a two-lane road with parking on both sides and a lot of driveways going onto it. So we really don't feel that there's going to be any issue with traffic on Whirlpool Street as we currently have at the time and with this future trend.

The other thing I want to show -- and we do have this simulation out in the hallway -- is using this twenty-four traffic, what does it really look like visually as you drive over it? And I also wanted to make a point that since 2010, we actually looked at all the -- we looked at the summer traffic. Especially the holiday summer traffic. During the holidays, during the summer. And they really do compare to the traffic we have for the typical a.m. and p.m. peak for commuter traffic in the morning and the evening on Whirlpool Street and on the parkway. The only difference, really, between a normal work day and a holiday is, the peak is kind of shifted more toward the middle of the day and it's a little bit
longer, but the volumes are not any higher
than they are during a typical day.

So, what does this look like? If I can
get this going, I don't know if you've seen
outside or out in the hallway, but this is
kind of going to take you down from an aerial
view. And we'll start at the south end down
near Main Street where we're going to take
off. This is kind of showing or representing
a morning peak hour, peak traffic, with Third
Street being new developed and this is, here,
Main Street. And we show some of the larger
vehicles, buses at the time (inaudible). And
I just want to give you a sense of the
density of traffic on Whirlpool Street.

We're running through this pretty quick,
but it's not like you're not going to be able
to get out of a side street or out of a
driveway. There's certainly some gaps, even
in a rush hour. And you noticed we just kind
of shaded in -- the old Robert Moses Parkway
is gone. And we just kind of highlighted the
traffic on Whirlpool Street.
Once again, this is the morning peak. And we have this area here where we're pretty much taking out that large overpass where the parkway is, going underneath the Whirlpool Bridge, passing by the Custom's House and coming up at Findlay -- officially Findlay Drive (inaudible). But we have a stop sign on Findlay. And you see in the morning, we have more traffic generally coming from the north and south, towards the City. People from the northtowns come in. Same thing on Lewiston Road or Main Street. More traffic heading south. But again, no real major congestion. And this is out 2040.

I think this just runs a little bit longer and it kind of stops. Yeah. So, I just want to kind of give you a flavor and give you a comparison of what's happening with traffic. Thanks. I'll turn it back over to Paul.

PAUL TRONOLONE: Thanks, Tom. Just in terms of -- you know, just to summarize in terms of levels of service, we had no major
deterioration of any levels of service or
intersection operations throughout the entire
project area. Just to touch-up on the
effects of the build alternative, considering
that this isn't like your typical project,
we're actually removing a highway and then
the traffic works when we remove that
highway. We actually have a lot of
improvement. It's not your typical --
usually, we're putting in a new right-of-way
or putting in a new expressway and talking
about the impact that expressway would have.
This sort of works in reverse of this DR.

So, the build alternative wouldn't
affect many neighborhoods, it would actually
reconnect city neighbors to the Gorge rim.
Thus, it would have no-adverse impact to land
use or demographics. It would actually
result in improvements to community cohesion.
As I said earlier, there's no displacement or
relocation of homes or residences or
businesses. The Federal Government requires
us to evaluate possible disproportionate
impacts to minority populations or low income populations.

And in fact, when we did that analysis for this project, we actually showed improvements where we had minority and low income populations. Along the quarter, we actually improved the setting for those populations. So, we have no what are called environmental justice impacts. And then, there were no significant impacts -- we had no major schools or houses of worship along the corridor or community facilities that would be affected by the project.

But mostly, from a social perspective, the project is fully consistent and actually one of the literal big moves of the City's comprehensive plan. And it's actually listed there as this project. So, we're actually implementing one of the City of Niagara Falls' comprehensive plan goals from its 2009 plan.

From the standpoint of economic effects, it would result in a direct influx of
thirty-five million in construction expenditures. When you roll that through various multiplier programs that are used as part of federal transportation project, it's a result of four hundred thirty jobs during construction. That's not just jobs working on the project. That's both direct jobs working on the project and the multiplier effects induced appointment of that expenditure in the local economy.

Also, in terms of those economic effects, in the longer term, as I said, it's consistent with both the City and the State's economic development objectives of Niagara Falls. Many of the projects that we are advancing in Niagara Falls at the Empire State and the USA Niagara level, involves trying to reconnect the City to it's greatest resource, its water. And this does that. And it also facilitates not because -- not only is it one of the big moves, it facilitates another big move in the City's comprehensive plan by facilitating and the
definition and realization of the City's concept for a cultural district.

And it's shown under this slide basically (inaudible) the area between Main Street, Third Street and the Niagara Gorge in that cultural district, in and around where the aquarium is and the Gorge Discovery Center is, where the City was talking about that. Just to show you, this is looking -- actually looking south towards downtown. If we look at those boundaries over the lake of the cultural district, that goes right up to the Gorge rim. And you can see, we have a highway quarter running right through the center of it.

But what would happen is -- you know, you have those types of facilities there now. We have the Schoellkopf Power Station ruin that have been recently opened up and creating an access point. An interpretation of the old Schoellkopf Power Plant, the Gorge Discovery Center, the aquarium -- the DiFranco Park, which is actually not being
used as a park right now, but has a lot of potential when you start looking at it in the context of removing that parkway and restoring those visual and physical connections. Whether it just is a matter of relating those uses amongst one another or actually looking at the possibility of possible new facilities in the future, either DiFranco Park or on private lands or even looking at some of the areas on the aquarium property that they've been considering for years for expansion or enhancement. But -- and we also actually look at the space right between there, there's a great pallet for the potential for future outdoor recreational program and other types of historic interpretation and programming. So, we think this project really facilities in the advancement and future of that cultural district mindset.

Also, in terms of economic effects, the project is consistent with other cities and states. We certainly plan economic public
projects including the Public Safety Project, the new -- the City's new train and mobile station and Underground Railroad Interpretive Center that's soon to open. And actually, right along the project quarter underneath one of the overpasses for the parkway, that would be freed up to the sky. And we think that's a major improvement of the setting of that property. Even in terms of business districts; the Third Street business district and North Main Street business district. We're not actually displacing any businesses, but we have the potential to redefine these districts as actual waterfront neighborhoods because we'll be able to walk right down to the Gorge and actually get down to the water.

And actually, Tom mentioned the Greater Buffalo/Niagara Regional Transportation Counsel that's recently done what they call their One Region Forward Plan. And it's a regional sustainability plan, it was called. And they did, as part of that plan, a what-if scenario along Main Street. What if we
removed the parkway? What could happen along Main Street? And they identified thirty discrete future redevelopment projects or reuse projects and notable reductions in the use of fossil fuel by increasing walkability and various other -- removal of other various other negative environmental effects.

In terms of those environmental effects, in terms of direct effects, we're removing twelve acres of pavement and we're creating roughly seven acres of new, open space. Why the difference? Because we're putting trails in some places and replacing the highway lanes with some trails. But those would probably be (inaudible) pavement tails.

But the more important thing is that, by opening up that space, you're actually linking together the other open spaces by creating -- and creating about a hundred and forty unbroken ribbon of green along the Gorge rim. And then, more importantly, opens that so it's directly into the Gorge for four hundred acres into the Gorge. So, it's
really just to create a massive green space along those two miles of the Gorge core.

What does that mean for improvements to environmental effects? Well, you don't have as much storm water runoff off of paved surfaces, you're going to have an improvement in water quality. And as I said earlier, we have opportunities for implementation of green infrastructure with all these green areas. It will allow for improvements to terrestrial ecology by eliminating a lot of habitat fragmentation. Used to be breaking up habitats where wildlife moves from place to place. It allows for the enhancement of diversity in the Gorge and the long-term enhancement of what is already designated as an important -- or a globally significant important bird area along the Niagara Gorge.

The project has been evaluated for it's consistency with the State's coastal policy and already approved by the Department of State to be consistent with those policies. And there's been no impacts -- there are no
wetlands along the quarter, no flood planes, no sole source -- there's obviously no farmlands that have been -- along the corridor that would be affected.

In terms of those traffic impacts, that we don't have a lot of traffic impacts. In terms of air quality, we have no significant impacts because we don't have a major increase in traffic. No carbon monoxide hot spots and no exceedances(sic) of any National Ambient Air Quality Standards. In terms of energy, we will use a significant amount of energy during the construction phase, especially during the demolition phase for the removal of the highway. But in the long term, there will be no significant change to the use of energy along the Gorge. Meaning that by removing the expressway, we're not creating long trips for cars having to redistribute their trips to get to where they want to go, and in doing so, using energy. There's really not a lot of cases of that.

In terms of noise, we did a full noise
assessment that included sixteen infield measurement rotations using the federally approved TNM, Noise Prediction Model. And it also added onto that 25-model receptor location. They picked those receptor locations based upon sensitive land uses. Whether they can park or residential land uses, where the threshold of the noise impact would be during that peak hour. In 2040, if we were to go over sixty-seven A-weighted decibels, they could have to consider some noise abatement. And for commercial, that's allowed to go up to seventy-two A-weighted decibels. And these are exterior measurements.

Well, using that projected twenty-year peak hour traffic noise, we did have some sound injuries along the quarter. Most were projected to go up by one decibel or less. But the largest increases that we saw were around Third Street. Near Main Street, we had a couple locations that went up by four decibels. But we're still under that
threshold to have to consider noise assessment in terms of significant impact.

In terms of that Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act Assessment -- just recapping -- it involves the use of park land, wildlife refugees or historic resources. The build alternative would only involve what's called, deminimus, or small-level use of outdoor recreation. Basically, because we would eliminate the southbound expressway lanes during the demolition phase of the project that would eliminate the Robert Moses Parkway Trail. Well, that's a recreational use that we would eliminate during the construction period. And the Federal Government considers that a use under 4(f). And it's only a temporary use, and we'd significantly improve it after the fact. So, it's allowed to go through.

We also involve some of the -- during the construction phase, some effects and use of DiFranco Park during that construction because we'll be eliminating some of the
pavement and outdated facilities as part of 
the construction phase. Also considered, 
working in a park, as a temporary use, is 
allowed to go forward. In terms of historic 
resources, naturally, we went through that 
entire archeological assessment. We came 
back with a no-adverse effect determination 
for historic resources. Thus, under 4(f), 
that's considered no use, so there's no 
impact there.

Just to go over that historic resources 
process, it involves a host of agencies 
including State Parks, the State Historic 
Preservation Officer, the various federally 
recognized tribes in the area, including the 
Seneca Nation and Tuscarora Nation and also 
other community groups and black groups for 
various historic districts in the area, which 
are designated as consulting parties that we 
brought in.

Now, as I said earlier, we conducted 
both a phase 1A document search and a phase 
1B archeological field survey for the
project. That's when we went out and did those shovel tests. And we also did a full structure assessment along that core. In consultation with those consulting parties, we evaluated effects of those resources by the project in terms of historic structures. We had no effect of National Register eligible bridges that are along -- the existing -- the two railroad bridges along the corridor and the Whirlpool Bridge -- or I'm sorry, the Whirlpool Bridge is actually both railroad and cars.

We had no effects to historic districts and no-adverse effects to either the National Register eligible aquarium site. The aquarium in Niagara is considered eligible for the National Register, and the U.S. Customs House. And actually, it provided improvements to its context by removing the highway. In terms of archeological resources, after we do those shovel tests along the corridor, we actually did not encounter any National Register eligible
resources. Thus, we had no impacts for them.

This was all written up in a -- what's called a Section 106 finding of the no-adverse effect. And that was circulated to all the consulting parties in the tribes. And it's already received concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Office and then it will be finalized as part of the final Environmental Assessment and Design Reform.

In terms of hazardous materials, there's a lot of them along the corridor, not unlike what we've encountered on a lot of projects in the area. We did a full assessment of past spills, location of tanks, various multiple sites along the corridor that have been dumped with things like asbestos-contained materials. There's basically utilities underground and some kind of pipe wrapping and other asbestos-containing materials. Bridge features often contain it. Led-based paint and other things like that. We've done
preliminary studies of radio-active materials along the corridor because we encountered these as part of the Lewiston Road project a couple years ago. So, we want to make sure that we have all our ducks in a row in terms of knowing where those issues are and knowing how we can have the protocol to place allowances in our project budget to deal with it when we encounter it.

In terms of threatened and endangered species, we had one in the area, the northern long-eared bat. It's listed in both state and federal levels as threatened. It's basically up and down the east coast and into Canada in terms of its range. Basically, what we have to do in terms of this is to prevent any tree cutting during its pup season or its birthing season, which is between June 1st and July 4th. We do have a major removal of trees that we can time the tree removal as part of the project to limit any impacts as part of the build alternative. Now, I've said a lot that we don't have
a lot of impacts. We don't have a lot of impacts in the long-term, but we're -- I'm not going to lie. This is a major construction project. It goes from eighteen to twenty-four months. There will be construction effects. We will have periodic and short-term traffic disruption. You'll have short-term inconveniences of access during the trail rim along the corridor. You'll have to deal from time to time with construction noise, like any major construction project and disruptions of business districts and the potential for workers on the sight to be exposed to hazardous materials while they're working.

How do you deal with that? Well, we have working protocol to deal with a lot of things. But the biggest thing that we try and do is continually report to you on what's going on. Having knowledge of what's going on eliminates a lot of the confusion of, why is my road closed, and things like that. So, through the course of the project, we're
going to try and keep communicating with you. For the south project, we do e-mail blasts. Any time a road is going to be closed for a morning or things like that, we continue to keep that. And we also use what are called, best practices, in terms of soil erosion and sedimentation control, road wetting, so you don't have a lot of dust impacts during the construction area. And limiting the hours of construction to deal with noise impacts and that. And then, as I said earlier, having those standard protocols for workers of what to do when they encounter hazardous materials along the project.

So, at this point, I'm going to turn it over to Anthony Dispenza to talk a little bit about the right-of-way. But I want to just talk real quick about some of those issues that we know about, thus far, in terms of easements. And really, in terms of right-of-way, the biggest issues that we have to deal with are between agencies to other agencies. But we know a few easements that
we have to deal with in terms of that service
driveway for the Niagara Falls Bridge
Commission would require an easement between
the Bridge Commission and DOT to actually
build it. If you move a little bit further
along the site, you know, the aquarium, I
talked earlier about that access driveway
down to the City Sewage Treatment Plant. In
order to open up that visual access, we are
proposing to take an easement to provide
access to the aquarium's rear employee
parking lot to Third Street, but also to
provide access for maintenance and city
service vehicles down into that pumping
station. But for the most part, it would
require two easements, one from NIPA to the
City of Niagara Falls and the Water Board,
and one between the City of Niagara Falls
Water Board and the Aquarium of Niagara.

Those are what we know about now.
Sometimes, other easements come up as we're
doing final design, especially construction
period easements that we might have. So, I'm
going to turn it over to Anthony now and talk
a little bit about those issues.

ANTHONY DISPENZA: Thank you, Paul. Good
afternoon. My name is Anthony Dispenza. I'm
a real estate specialist for the New York
State Department of Transportation and the
Office of Right of Way. If a build
alternative is selected, our design engineers
will establish the amount of right-of-way
required to accommodate the project design.
Title searches will be conducted by the
department and individual appropriation maps
will be drawn for each property that will be
affected. It is at this point that the
Office of Right of Way becomes involved as it
is our responsibility to acquire the land
necessary for the highway project.

A real estate specialist will contact
each property owner affected by the project
to schedule an appointment to meet
one-on-one. The meeting will be at the
owner's convenience and is usually at the
acquisition site. Real estate specialist
will provide you with preliminary information regarding the proposed acquisition and verified ownership and/or occupancy of the property.

Real estate specialist will do the following. Deliver a copy of the acquisition map, explain the project and the effect it will have on your property, provide a preliminary timetable of information regarding the acquisition process. The Department of Transportation will order an appraisal for each effected property. This analysis is prepared by the inner state appraisers or the consultant appraisers that have specialized training and expertise.

Any information you can provide is welcomed and you are encouraged to accompany the appraiser during this inspection. The appraiser reports are supported by recent vacant and/or improved sales. Property owners will be paid for all land improvement and building improvement within the acquired area. A thorough analysis of the remaining
property will also be conducted. Any adverse
effect on the value of the remaining property
will be considered.

When the appraisal is completed, it
undergoes a multi-layer review process before
it is finally approved. The work under one
office system upon the full approved
appraisal amount is offered. Included in the
offer package will be a written statement
detailing the offer. The real estate
specialist assigned to your claim will
explain the agreements and payment process in
greater detail.

You are entitled to receive the State's
full-offered compensation, even you if you
disagree with the amount. Any property owner
who disagrees with the offer may attempt to
negotiate the settlement by providing the
appropriate documentation to substantiate a
request for an increase. Failing that, as
the property owner, may (inaudible) to file a
claim against the State in the Court of
Claims.
Shortly after the offer is made, the Department of Transportation will legally acquire the property by filing a map and Notice of Appropriation in the office of the County Clerk. The real estate specialist assigned to your claim will assist you in receiving your compensation, which will be paid after an agreement is signed and satisfactory completion of closing papers are prepared by the New York State Department of Law.

The design alternative being considered will not necessitate any residential or commercial relocations. Should any relocations become necessary, the Department will provide relocation services in accordance with Title 2 of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, commonly referred to as, The Uniform Act.

In conclusion, I'd like to say that we realize this is not the typical buyer-seller relationship. (Inaudible) to acquire private
property for public use, you are entitled to just compensation. The goal of the Office of Right of Way is to make sure that this process proceeds as smoothly as possible for all concerned. Thank you for your time and attention.

PAUL TRONOLONE: Thank you, Anthony. Now, let's just go over next steps in the project schedule. The end of the public comment period for the DR/EA is September 9, 2016. After that, we have to issue final DR/EA which would respond to any comments you submit tonight and up to and including the end of the public comment period. We're hoping to have that done by November. And then, we'll hopefully have a finding of no significant impact issue if we have no major issues by December of this year. And we spend the better part of 2017 in final design and prepare (inaudible) documents with, hopefully, issuing a request for bid in January of 2018 so we can get started on construction in that coming spring.
I want to close with just a few visualizations, the ground-level visualizations to give you a sense of what we're talking about. I showed you aerials before. Just to end a little bit with something fun, this is that entrance looking into the Gorge Discovery Center, that on-ramp. We talked about reducing some of the scale, adding a gateway feature maybe to create that landscape of driveway into the Gorge Discovery Center. This is an area looking south on Cedar Street, along Whirlpool Street or Third Street existing. And then you can see the area, right here, would be opening up to the Gorge on your right. If you'd look -- this is looking south, once again, along the Whirlpool Street. This line of trees is where the existing parkway is and the Gorge is behind that. You can see that reconstructed with a narrower Whirlpool Street or wider verge along those residential properties and full access out to the Gorge edge.
This is the biggest one. This is that overpass at Ontario Street near the new train station. You see that. That is a major visual feature in the landscape. And -- decided to freeze up on me. Hang on one second. And that's -- that's a major -- opening up the sky. This is a major of trail heading down into the Gorge. This is -- we're looking maybe for some interpretation in conjunction with the Underground Railroad Center right across the street. And finally, this is looking down the existing parkway around Findlay Drive. The edge of the Gorge would be right over here beyond those trees. And you can see changing that into green space and trail (inaudible) give you a sense of that.

With that, I'm going to end my presentation. I'm going to stop talking and we're going to start hearing from you. This is the public comment period. And I'm going to ask the guy videotaping the proceedings to move down, because he wants to videotape you
for our federal partners. He's going to need a moment to do that.

While he's doing that, I'm going to go over how to submit public comments. Either you can do it verbally tonight -- we have the microphone set up here. I'll be calling people up. I'll remind you, once again, it's not a question-and-answer session. However, people are still out in the lobby if you do have questions about some of the things that I talked about tonight and want a little bit more clarification before you make your comment, that's fine. If you don't feel comfortable standing up at the microphone making a comment, we do have a comment table where you can write out a comment, submit it in the box tonight. Or you can take it home and think about it, review some of the documents online and submit it via e-mail or regular mail.

I'm going to leave this slide up, but it's also -- all this information is in the brochure tonight. If you want to remind
everyone that the comments are due by September 9th, 2016. And when you came in tonight, you were given a -- if you wanted to make a comment for the record, you were given a speaker request card. I've got some of those early that I have a list of. If you want -- at some point, if you decide during the comment period, I want to make a comment now, if you could fill out a speaker request card, just so the stenographer has the correct spelling of your name.

So, I had some people sign up before the public meeting and I'm going to call them up to the podium. I'm going to remind everyone that, as we said in the public announcement, there's a five-minute limit on your comments. So with that, I'm going to invite Helen Kress of the Niagara Heritage Partnership up to the podium. Floor is yours.

HELEN KRESS: There are over twelve thousand years of natural history in and along the Niagara Gorge. And the Gorge is a latecomer according to the planet's geological clock.
Unfortunately, the current proposal is about vehicles and social history. It's not about the ecological uniqueness of Niagara Falls that brings tourists here. So why did these design plans focus on social and cultural rather than environmental industries and futures?

Pulled from astrophysicist, Carl Sagan, in 1994 -- said it better than I can. He described how if aliens were to approach earth from outer space -- so think of an aerial view -- they might think that the dominant life forms here are vehicles. About zooming in closer to earth, the aliens would, quote, see -- quote, this is Carl Sagan's quote -- see the dominant life form on the planet, the streets of the cities and the roadways of the countryside are evidently built for their benefit. Then the aliens would discover tiny parasites that occasionally enter and exit the dominant organism. The tiny parasites play some deeper role, but this is puzzling. But the
dominant organism, whoever they are, have
gone to so much trouble to rework the surface
of the earth are simultaneously destroying
the o-zone layer and the forests, eroding
their topsoil and perform massive
uncontrolling (inaudible) on the planet,
unquote.

So obviously, in that story from Carl
Sagan, humans are the tiny parasites that
occasionally enter and exit the dominant
organisms, vehicles. And this designed
proposal is about vehicles and transportation
more than anything else. For instance, the
first place in the proposal where wildlife
habitat is discussed is chapter four.
Chapters one, two and three are about
transportation. I did a crude
measurement -- and I apologize to Carl
Sagan's legacy. A crude measurement of part
of the proposal with a ruler, the appendix
"F", entitled, ecological information is one
eighth of an inch thick, while the appendix
of cultural and social resources is one and
five eighths inches thick. Why is there
thirteen times more information devoted to
social rather than environmental history and
futures?

With the growth in -- of companies such
as Solar City, for example, in Western New
York, we seem to be moving towards a green
economy, a little economy, low-carbon
economy, maybe even a nature-rich economy.
And that's good. And as we do this, tourists
will recognize more and more and not be
fooled by a green washing, meaning the
appearance of being eco-friendly. Our
tourism industry should incentivise(sic)
ecological restoration and environmental care
so that tourism customers spend more time
outside of their vehicles experiencing the
restored native habitats of the Gorge.
That's tourism that walks, listens, observes,
photographs, studies the natural world around
it. And they come here to see that in
Niagara Falls.

Tourists who stayed for days or weeks at
a time, not just the minutes it takes to drive by, even on a park road, drive away from twelve thousand years of natural history. So, based on these remarks, I do not believe this parkway removal project recognizes the value of Niagara's natural environment in a meaningful way. I would like to see much more attention devoted to the ecological distinctiveness of the Niagara River Gorge and Gorge rim and to future sources of tourism that would enrich that ecosystem. Perfect time.

PAUL TRONOLONE: Thank you for your comment. I'd like to call to the microphone, Lisa Vitello.

LISA VITELLO: This community has waited nineteen years for this project. We now have a historic opportunity to show the world what is on the other side of the rainbow, so-to-speak. So, I urge the decision makers to listen carefully to the comments and requests made by this community and its leaders. We have one shot here to get this
right. We shouldn't cut corners. We shouldn't look for the cheapest or easiest route here. Bricks, mortar, asphalt should be kept at a minimum. Again, we shouldn't look for the easiest way to get this done or the least expensive.

This community hosts a number of entities that have made hundreds of millions of dollars off of our resources and our land and will continue to do so. Those entities now have the opportunity to give back to this community the beauty and grandeur that we lost a long time ago. So, please, let's move carefully and thoughtfully, keeping in mind the revered space that we are hoping to showcase.

Once again, listen carefully to the suggestions made by the people who know best, which are the people of this community and their elected leaders. I'd like to thank all of the people who worked on this project. All of the organizations, state and otherwise, their staff. Let's just not mess
up the end game. Thank you.

PAUL TRONOLONE: Thank you, Lisa. I'd like to call to the microphone, Carl Bernhardt.

CARL BERNHARDT: Good evening. My main concerns with this having finally seen the full plates outside in the lobby -- it's a beautiful pictorial representation of the vision in what wants to be done. However, our first speaker, Helen, I really do -- it's nice to have heard her first. Because I think it's important that we do approach this from a natural perspective. That we instead of making a manicured lawn that looks like Canada's Niagara Falls, that we make ours unique that wants to bring people in for our uniqueness, not to just be another big tourist entity that they've already developed over there. Let's make it unique.

I walk that path regularly for exercise. I see the tour buses come in. I see the Japanese, the Koreans, the Italians. You name it, I can name the countries of people coming in looking at the natural wonders of
the Gorge. They want to see the birds. They
want to see the animals. They want to see
the plants too. They don't want just another
manicured lawn with a few trees in it. So,
we should make a unique to Niagara Falls for
those people. Because that word of mouth
would get back to their countries and bring
those tourists in. And that's what we're
looking for. We want outside money coming
in, not just inside money being spread
around. That will help Niagara Falls build.

Okay. Now, as far as the transportation
goes, I will comment on that. Because
looking at all the entry and access ways, the
difficulty I see with all those access ways
being at grade is that now you have the
potential for children and people coming
across regularly, which will require signals.
It will slow traffic down on Whirlpool Street
once it's rerouted. We already have Main
Street, which is all lights. Do we have the
capacity to deal with that? Are we saying
that the population in this area is going to
remain static? Or will it grow eventually with what we're doing? So we also have to prep for the future and not just today. So, we have that.

The Rainbow Bridge is clogged. That area is clogged with traffic. Holidays, weekends, all summer long. What bottleneck is that going for create there when we start shutting these ways down? And we have the easy access to help our neighbors in Youngstown also get people up to Old Fort Niagara and our historical hallmarks up there at this point. So, how much of this do you really want to shut down and direct through residential neighborhoods increasing traffic and increasing risks associated with that? Particularly, if we have more children in these areas.

Again, to end my summary, I think a natural look that promotes our uniqueness and our natural background with the Gorge is the best approach. And then, the transportation side, we need to, again, be looking at safety
for children, for school buses and to promote adequate traffic flow into the City. Thank you.

PAUL TRONOLONE: Thank you. I'd like to call Jim Hufnagel to the microphone.

JIM HUFNAGEL: Four storms, seven years ago, our forefathers began the process of removing the parkway. Wrong speech. Sorry. Yesterday, I was driving into the City of Niagara Falls on the Moses Parkway north of Lewiston. I came up behind a large RV. It was big. Literally, a house on wheels. I followed it over the Power Project where for some reason it slowed down to twenty miles per hour. And the thought crossed my mind, what if that huge camper bus was packed (inaudible) with dynamite? What if there was a terrorist at the wheel and what if it was detonated on the Moses Parkway in the middle of the Power Project just a couple of hundred feet away from me?

Some would recognize such as threat. In this day and age, you have to take off your
footwear in the airport then get a full body
scan before you can board a plane. We're
spending billions on border security,
including cameras to scrutinize every inch of
border from here to Youngstown, twenty-four
hours a day. And an outfit called Isis has
motivated (inaudible) tax from Paris to
Brussels to San Bernardino. Meanwhile, our
Albany leaders bury their heads in the sand
when it comes to the Robert Moses Parkway
affording twenty-four hour a day, seven days
a week, unrestricted vehicular access to one
of the largest hydropower generated plants in
the world located right here.

Think about this. In 1993, a bomb
hidden in a van exploded underneath the World
Trade Center in New York City killing several
people and injuring hundreds more. In 1994,
(inaudible) airplane crashed onto the south
line of the (inaudible) of the White House
killing the pilot. The plane came to rest at
the base of the building. So, this is what
we have. Terrorist targeting the World Trade
Center in '93 and a disturbed individual flying a plane into the White House in '94. A few years after the 9/11 catastrophe, Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, stated in a radio interview that -- and I quote, I don't think that anybody could have predicted that these people would take an airplane and slam it into the World Trade Center.

Then, of course, there was the famous quote, Bin Ladin determined to strike in U.S. memo that arrived on the president's desk thirty-six days before the 9/11 attacks. This is how we expect our government to address potential threats, which is to say, with gross incompetency. And now we potentially have deja vu all over again.

Well, (inaudible) supposedly, quote, hardened the Niagara Power Project. Any terrorist can pack a semi-truck with enough plastic explosives to blow the Power Project to kingdom come thanks to direct access on the Robert Moses Parkway. Or even some in unbalanced individual. Seem farfetched? In
1995, domestic terrorists loaded a truck with fertilizer bombs and exploded it, destroying a federal building in Oklahoma City. You may recall the name of the perpetrator. His name was Tim McVeigh. Tim McVeigh grew up in Pendleton. That's two towns over. About twelve miles from the Power Project. Had he chosen the Power Project for his attack, we probably wouldn't be here tonight.

Must anyone dismiss these comments as hysteria, allow me to point out that in the days after 9/11, the State Department of Transportation blocked the parkway off as it enters the Power Project at Devil's Hole State Park with large dump trucks. The Buffalo News and Niagara Gazette both featured this issue in news articles at the time. The Gazette had a front-page headline revealing that NIPA carelessly released detailed schematics of the Power Project as part of its fifty year relicensing.

The Niagara Power Project is readily examinable on Google Earth. And besides the
probability of a bomb being transported on
the Parkway and detonated, blowing the Power
Project to smithereens, imagine some radical
element discharging gasoline in the length of
the facility along the Parkway and then
setting it to light. You'd be able to see
that from outer space. The possibility for
terrorist attacks on the Niagara Power
Project via the Robert Moses Parkway are
endless.

Over the years, concerned citizens have
repeatedly brought this situation, via
e-mails, letters and newspaper articles, to
the attention of elected officials, such as
Hilary Clinton when she was New York's
Senator, and subsequently to the attention of
governor, Andrew Cuomo. And they have done
nothing. They have decided to, for political
reasons, put us at risk by leaving the
Parkway intact as it traverses the Power
Project. Heaven forbid that there would ever
be need for them to answer to that. Shutting
down and removing the parkway all the way to
the city line is the only rational way to mitigate risk.

PAUL TRONOLONE: Thank you, Mr. Hufnagel. I'd like to call Douglas Funke from the Citizens from Regional Transit Corporation.

DOUGLAS FUNKE: When I was a teenager, when they took my grandmother's house, on Whirlpool Street, and put a Thruway through the beautiful Niagara Falls Park, I couldn't understand why we did it then and I'm so glad that we are now undoing that huge mistake. Again, my name is Doug from -- I'm the president of Citizens Regional Transit.

A couple of quick comments here. I did have written comments last time and my comments are very similar to those today. If you look at the objectives of this project, include access, bike, pedestrian and vehicular -- which I would include transit vehicles as well as personal vehicles -- conserve the ecology, minimize impact to neighborhoods, support the green plan. All of those scream for public
transportation.

We are thrilled to see that we now have a trolley that takes tourists from Niagara Falls up to Fort Niagara and back. My wife and I rode it a couple weekends ago and loved it. Great step in the right direction. Those things run every half an hour. I give Mayor Dyster a lot of credit for helping to make that happen. We need to continue to make sure public transportation is an important part of this project moving forward.

And I just want to mention that we have actually partnered with the Partnership for the Public Good. So, my comments today reflect both my organization, Citizens Regional Transit, as well as the Partnership for the Public Good, which is a conservancy of over a hundred committal-based organizations. We want to see better public transportation along the greenway. Ultimately, we would like to see green transportation. We'd like to see those
trolleys become electronic to highlight the benefits of the hydropower that we have here in Buffalo to demonstrate the value of that power.

So, we're very happy with what's happening. We want to keep public transportation in mind as we move forward. Thank you.

PAUL TRONOLONE: That is the end of the list I have of people who signed up thus far. Is there anyone in the audience that would like to make a further comment for the public record? Sir, can I ask you to say your name, spell it for the stenographer?

CARL SKOMPINSKI: Yes. And I'll write out a sheet.

PAUL TRONOLONE: Thank you.

CARL SKOMPINSKI: My name is Carl Skompinski.

Couple things. Regarding transportation, I'm hoping that they have some sort of bump-outs for traveling where you can safely get on and get off. Regarding one of the other items -- regarding the cultural district, I
think this is a great opportunity to start looking at maybe a branding of the suspension bridge village area. And the third thing is, I hope you post all of your documents online. You didn't do that for the south Robert Moses. Some of those documents, especially the appendix's, were not online. If you can get them online, that'd be great. Thank you.

PAUL TRONOLONE: We'll make sure they're all there. Would anyone else like to make a comment for the public record? Once. Twice. Three. Hearing is done. It is currently 7:17. I'm going to adjourn the public meeting. You're welcome to coffee and cookies or to see the presentation, but I'd like to keep the hearing open for -- what did we say -- until eight o'clock just in case we have any latecomers. We'll reconvene if anybody wants to make a comment for the public record, but at present, we're going to adjourn the public meeting until we have another comment. Thank you.
It is now eight o'clock and there are no more comments forthcoming. I declare this hearing adjourned. Thank you and have a good night.

(Whereupon, the public hearing then concluded.)

*     *     *     *

ACR OF WNY
(716) 362-9838
STATE OF NEW YORK

SS:

COUNTY OF ERIE

I, SARA E. BEITER, a Notary Public in
and for the State of New York, County of Erie, DO
HEREBY CERTIFY that the minutes of the PUBLIC
HEARING were taken down by me in a verbatim
manner by means of Machine Shorthand, on AUGUST
25, 2016. That the minutes were then reduced in
writing under my direction. That the minutes
were taken to be used in the above-entitled
action.

SARA E. BEITER,
Notary Public.
ACR OF WNY
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